

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Students helping their communities SHINE

Students for Health Innovation and Education is a medical student-led, project-based initiative at the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary, where teams work with local under-served communities. We were fortunate to serve as co-presidents of SHINE during our first two years of medical school. Our teams worked incredibly hard to support their populations and they have set an exceptional example for future SHINE and other student-led initiatives.

Indigenous wellness

Working primarily with the Tsuu T'ina Nation to support local health initiatives, this team liaised with a community nurse to understand health care gaps and needs, supporting initiatives such as Breastfeeding Bingo and the Diabetes Walk.

On campus, they collaborated with Indigenous health representatives to host screenings of the First Contact documentary series, generating fruitful discussion around Indigenous history and its intergenerational impact.

The word "SHINE" is written in large, bold, gold-colored letters with a sparkling, glittery texture. Each letter is filled with a pattern of small, irregular gold shapes that catch the light, giving it a shimmering appearance.

Students for Health Innovation and Education (SHINE) is a medical student-led, project-based initiative at the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary.

Youth wellness

Holding creative workshops at Calgary public schools in lower socio-economic status neighborhoods, this team taught important topics such as nutrition, exercise and body image. In addition to being fun, these workshops helped support teenagers to adopt sustainable, healthy lifestyles.

As SHINE continues to evolve, they hope to reach more schools and ages and develop a formal curriculum with teachers that can be tailored appropriately.

Refugee wellness

For Yazidi youth who came to Calgary as refugees, understanding the pathways towards post-secondary and/or reaching their career aspirations can be challenging in a new country.

This year, our team worked with Calgary Catholic Immigration Services to bridge this gap between goals and opportunities. They connected these youth to advisors and helped organize campus tours of various institutions. In upcoming years, the team hopes to work with more organizations across the city to support refugee wellness and develop a workshop series.

Addictions symposium

Every year, the Cumming School of Medicine hosts an addictions symposium for our student body, community members, researchers and other allied health care professions. Symposium themes reflect what's relevant to society at the time, and have included harm reduction and the nexus between cannabis and health care, in most recent years. These symposia are outstanding successes, bringing in expert voices and stakeholders to deliver keynotes, panels and workshops for our attendees.

Organ and tissue donation advocacy

New this year, a group of students passionate about organ and tissue donation approached us to start a novel SHINE initiative. Their inaugural event was a speaker series where an organ donor, recipient, transplant co-ordinator and researcher came together to share their perspectives regarding organ needs in Alberta. In the future, this group will continue to educate through informative events and advocacy campaigns, as well as form collaborations with other groups such as Canadian Blood Services.

Overall, we are so proud of all our teams and members for their tireless efforts toward the betterment of health for our local communities. Although we have all progressed into clerkship now and have had to pass off the torch to the incoming class, we remain excited about SHINE and what's to come for the team and the communities they serve.